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FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8939

INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

RUEKJCS/JCS WASHINGTON DC

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

RUZEJAA/USNIC SARAJEVO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SARAJEVO 001468

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2018

TAGS: MOPS MARR BK

SUBJECT: BOSNIA--INFORMED OF CHANGES IN IRAQ COALITION

REF: STATE 96122

Classified By: Amb. Charles English for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Ambassador informed the Tri-presidency, and, separately, the Minister of Defense that Bosnian armed forces would no longer be needed in Iraq in 2009 (Reftel). All three members of the Presidency expressed their satisfaction that Bosnia was able to assist in the stabilization of Iraq and welcomed the news that Iraq was now able to take over security responsibilities from some coalition members. Chairman of the Presidency Silajdzic emphasized BiH's willingness to be a provider of security and not just a consumer.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador underlined that we will continue to look for opportunities to work together with Bosnia, noting that "The need in Afghanistan is still very strong." The Bosnian Serb member of the Presidency Radmanovic told the Ambassador "We will have time to discuss future opportunities, but we should refrain from doing so now, as we are talking about the withdrawal from Iraq." In a separate telephone call about the Presidency's press release, Radmanovic's aide told us that he had instructed her to make sure that the other members' cabinets did not put anything in the press statement about future deployments or Afghanistan.

Comment:

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¶3. (C) We have a clear interest in encouraging Bosnia to maintain overseas deployments. We believe that a Bosnian contribution to other international missions--namely, ISAF--is politically feasible, despite Radmanovic's preference for waiting until the Bosnian troops withdraw before they take up the issue. Bosnian forces would require substantial support to carry out the mission and the necessary political and practical steps will take time. However, since being invited to join PfP in 2006 and then reinforced by the invitation to join Intensified Dialogue at Bucharest, NATO membership has been, along with EU membership, one of the two uniting goals of a divided country. Bosnian engagement in Afghanistan would increase their inter-operability and ability to deploy in future operations, as well as instruct them on the level of reform necessary to reach their goal of joining NATO. Continued engagement in coalition activities also leads to higher levels of bilateral security assistance, which has proved key in supporting the defense reform agenda, itself a cornerstone of our effort of building a sovereign, united Bosnia firmly anchored to the Euro-Atlantic community.

ENGLISH